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Grammar Implementation in the Classroom

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Abstract

Prior to 2015, grammar in the South Carolina standards only required students to learn only basic sentence types and mechanics. However, in the relatively new Common Core into the state standards now requires much more thorough instruction. But is that instruction taking place? Grammar is “a set of rules that explain how a system operates, and in language, this system typically refers to syntax (the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language) and morphology (the study of how words are formed in a language)” (Gartland and Smolkin 391). Proper grammar instruction is essential for students to be able to succeed as academic writers. Unfortunately, more and more professors find that students struggle to write basic sentences by the time that they enter college (Smith 9). The purpose of my study was to discover the effectiveness of grammar instruction in South Carolina and to find ways of making that instruction more effective. To do this, I administered surveys to students and teachers throughout the state to determine their perception of the instruction. In several 9th grade classes, I also administered pre-tests and post-tests to determine student progress following instruction. At the end of the study, I have determined that while students showed marginal improvement after grammar instruction, more varied and intensive instruction is needed throughout the state and in all grade levels if students are to meet the level of writing required for a professional career.

Grammar Implementation in the Classroom

The exact definition of what grammar is has changed over a number of years. The Linguistic Society of America defines grammar as “simply the collection of principles defining how to put together a sentence” (Chung and Pullum). There are two classifications of grammar that are essential to understanding the complexities of its usage as well as the controversy surrounding its instruction: descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar. In simple terms, descriptive grammar “present[s] language as it is actually used by speakers and writers of various communities in different settings and contexts” (Gartland and Smolkin 392) and prescriptive grammar “describes how people should speak and write” (Gartland and Smolkin 392). In most classrooms, the focus lies on using prescriptive grammar to teach Standard American English, since this type of grammar is expected in professional settings. For that reason, the bulk of my research and the research discussed in this paper will focus on prescriptive grammar. However, descriptive grammar will be lightly referenced and discussed as well.

The primary question to be addressed here is not whether grammar should be taught, but instead how best to teach it. Unfortunately, there is no single or clear answer to this question. Rather, research has shown some clear examples of how this subject should not be taught. Shoudong Feng and Kathy Powers, both professors at the University of Arkansas, believe that “focusing on [writing] instruction is much more effective in improving student writing than on grammar and mechanics” (67). This instruction should not involve an “isolated teaching of grammar rules and concepts” which has been proved ineffective (Feng and Powers 67). We must still teach these same rules and concepts, but in a way that students can apply to their daily lives. Unfortunately, teaching grammar in isolation has resulted in “more and more college professors reporting that their students are incapable of writing complete sentences, and . . .

finding major agreement problems in what is written” (Smith 9). My own research has shown a similar pattern of confusion in students throughout South Carolina.

HISTORY OF GRAMMAR

Before I explain my findings, I first want to highlight some changes in the way grammar has been taught since its conception. Grammar first appeared with the ancient Greeks who formed a written language based on human speech that allowed them to create some of the greatest written works of all time (Hanganu 5). Grammar used to be primarily descriptive in nature—relying on ever-changing spoken language to construct written thought. These same Greeks referred to grammar as being “an experimental knowledge of the usages of language as generally current among poets and prose writers” (Hanganu 6). Likewise, “ancient scholars like Quintilian (35–95 C.E.), a Roman rhetorician, aimed to use grammar instruction as a means to produce habits of language that would enable students to become successful and productive citizens” (Gartland and Smolkin 392). This methodology involved students listening, reading, writing and speaking based on the models of scholars. Grammar remained fairly stagnant until the arrival of King Henry VIII, who decried exclusive control over grammar instruction, specifically through the Latin-based book by William Lilly which taught the eight parts of speech (Hanganu 14). Grammar instruction shifted slightly in the Elizabethan Era when the focus became how to speak correctly. This change occurred, “as a result of a large influx of new words (fascinatingly, Shakespeare himself introduced at least 1,700 new words to the English language), many scholars contended that English was ‘out of control’”(Gartland and Smolkin 392). With all of these new words in play, scholars decided that there needed to be a set of rules in place explaining how to use these words effectively. This goal turned into an effort to standardize the English language, specifically in terms of words, spellings, and usage—hence the

creation of dictionaries, punctuation manuals, and yes, grammar manuals (Gartland and Smolkin 392). However, the purpose of these manuals quickly turned into an effort to “correct” the language of those in a lesser class by forcing them to adhere to these newly found rules.

By the 1700s, prescriptive grammar had become the primary method of instruction. In 1795, *The English Grammar* was published as the first book meant specifically for classroom use (Hanganu 16). Prescriptive grammarians wanted to base English on a Latin model; “their goal was to enable English speakers and writers of all classes to produce a single correct form, even if, in doing so, they had introduced awkward new rules from their Latin language reliance (such as the rule that forbids ending a sentence with a preposition)” (Gartland and Smolkin 394). This Latin shift is what initially started the strict rules and procedure-based pedagogy that has been the focus of grammar instruction for the last three-hundred years. It was not until the mid-to-late 20th century that people began to realize that this type of instruction was ineffective in helping students speak in Standard English. To combat this problem, in 1989 “organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) suggested that teachers should reject approaches to grammar and usage study that support the linguistic imperialism of prescriptive ‘school grammars’” (as cited in Gartland and Smolkin 394). Unfortunately, as teachers agreed to reject this approach, they did not agree to accept another in replacement. Since this time, grammar instruction has been inconsistent at best and non-existent at worst. Because of this ideological shift, students have not had the instruction needed for them to be able to communicate effectively.

CURRENT PROBLEMS IN GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

One of the largest problems that education currently has is that current teachers are victims of a lack of grammar instruction. If teachers do not know correct grammar, then how can they be expected to teach it? Since the 1960s, “Written expression [has become] recognized as the most neglected of the basic skills and there is no consensus on the best method for either teaching composition or evaluating it” (Robinson and Feng 2). This failure is, in part, because of the lack of confidence teachers have in the subject. When teachers feel confident about a topic, then they are more likely to spend time teaching in ways that foster collaboration and conversation; but when teachers are uncomfortable teaching the topic, the focus changes to rules without context (Gatland and Smolkin 393). However, Constance Weaver, Professor Emerita of English at Western Michigan University, believes that even if teachers are not grammar experts, they can learn the basics and make their purpose of teaching grammar, “to strengthen student writing. . . [by moving] away from teaching grammar in isolation and experiment instead with teaching less grammar but teaching it more effectively for writing” (5). With similar goals in mind, Dr. Luaren Gartland and Professor Luara Smolkin, both from the University of Virginia, suggest three principles to correct the problems currently found in schools.

The first principle that Gartland and Smolkin suggest, is to “integrate grammar instruction into the overall language arts curriculum” (393). By integrating grammar into writing and reading, students will be able to see the relevance behind the rules and regulations that are usually taught in school. More than this, students will be able to see how to improve their own work during everyday lessons. This principle is not meant to eliminate the typical curriculum, “nor is it meant to replace critical time spent reading, writing, and speaking. Integrated grammar instruction is meant to complement other language arts instruction” (Gartland and Smolkin 393).

As students read literature and write about it, they can also learn how to more effectively communicate their ideas by using Standard English. This approach is supported by the research of Mary Renwick, who says that students need to be taught skills more than they need to be caught the concepts (29). By integrating these skills into the English curriculum, students will be better equipped to apply the concepts into their written works and everyday speech.

The second principle that Garland and Smolkin suggest is to “develop clear objectives for grammar instruction (394). What this means is that in addition to knowing what each aspect of grammar is, students also must know what each aspect means (394). In order to accomplish this principle, teachers must take the initiative to set clear learning goals that go beyond basic cognitive ability. Students need to be able to understand why each element is important and what its purpose is in order to write with that element. Grammar instruction must be intentionally implemented with clear instruction if students are to grasp the concepts and use them effectively. Likewise, Renwick asserts,

I realized it was my job not to have students become clones of me in their usage but to make their transfer from language text to writing a meaningful step, one that would use more practical manipulation of their own words and less of the technical approach that is normally found in grammar text instruction (29).

Both sets of researchers agree that in order for students to become successful writers, the goal needs to be for students to understand the reason and practicality behind the instruction. By setting the clear objectives that Garland and Smolkin suggest, students will be better equipped to transfer the knowledge in these practical ways.

The third principle is that teachers must “Experiment With Specific Classroom Activities” (Garland and Smolkin 394). To accomplish this goal, the authors mention two

different approaches: contrastive analysis and sentence combining attached to mentor texts. Contrastive Analysis is far from a new idea. It was, “originally developed by Charles Fries (1945), expanded and clarified by Robert Lado (1957), and demonstrated by in [*sic*] numerable dissertations” (Spolsky 251). Contrastive Analysis is, “the systematic study of languages that examines linguistic similarities and differences” (Garland and Smolkin 394). Ronald Wardhaugh, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Toronto Based, defines this concept as being, “the idea that it is possible to contrast the system of one language-the grammar, phonology and lexicon-with the system of a second language in order to predict those difficulties which a speaker of the second language will have in learning the first language and to construct teaching materials to help him learn that language” (124). In layman's terms, this strategy allows a student to compare sentence structure between different languages and/or dialects. Garland and Smolkin have found that this strategy is “popular among many teachers because it explicitly teaches SE [Standard English] while honoring the diverse linguistic resources that children bring to the classroom. Rather than forbidding children's non-SE dialects, teachers who use CA [contrastive analysis] are able to build on what children already know about language and leverage those resources to their advantage” (395). This strategy is effective because it allows students to use their knowledge of descriptive grammar from home in order to build on prescriptive grammar in the classroom. This methodology allows the students to feel valued as a resource to learning, rather than feel as though they are behind in the classroom because they are not as acquainted with Standard English as their peers are. Overall, this strategy “was most useful in providing a framework for the development of useful pedagogical grammar”(Spolsky 253). This strategy discourages simple error correction, but rather encourages students to recognize the context that they are writing for. This way, the students can maintain

their home dialect as part of their identities, while still using Standard American English when appropriate.

Sentence combining and mentor texts are the second approach that Garland and Smolkin suggest. Prior to the 1980s, sentence combining was widely believed to be beneficial; however, between 1980 and 2000 rumors on its ineffectiveness caused the practice to die away (Dean 87). Sentence combining is when students find multiple ways to join simple sentences into compound or complex sentences. There are two types of sentence combining: open and cued. Cued sentences allow students to learn ways to combine sentences by following a series of directions, and open sentences allow the students to use their own creativity to combine the sentences (Dean 90). To introduce students to sentence combining activities, the teacher can use mentor texts that show the student how the same sentences can be combined multiple ways. For example, the teacher can take a passage from a text that the students are reading, break the sentence into smaller sentences, and allow the students to re-combine them with cued and open exercises (Dean 97). The teacher can then compare the passage to the original texts so that students can see the difference between what they created and what the author created with the same information. Garland and Smolkin encourage these activities because, “SC [sentence combining] activities provide students with exposure to a variety of syntactical forms that they can ultimately use in their own speaking and writing” (398). Ideally, this practice will inspire the student to try multiple combinations in their own writing and increase their sentence variety. Students will be more prepared for advanced writing when they learn these basic skills.

While these principles may not correct all problems that students have when learning prescriptive grammar, this does provide a starting point for teachers to work with in creating new instructional practices. Garland and Smolkin’s ideas create a solution for the problem that

Robinson and Feng present when they state, “struggling writers often lack or have ineffective strategies for accessing the knowledge they possess,[*sic*] therefore effective research-based strategies must be implemented in the classroom to help struggling writers to become successful writers” (3). The principles listed above are the type of research-based strategies needed to create successful writers in any grade level.

COMMON CORE AND SOUTH CAROLINA

According to the 2016 State Report Card, the most recent report available, 57.3% of students did not meet or exceed expectations on the SC Ready ELA exam. Likewise, only 31.8% of students met the ACT College-Ready Benchmarks in South Carolina. The average ACT score in the state for 2016 was a 16.8 (Spearman and Randolph). Clearly, these reports are unsatisfactory. These English examinations consist of all aspects of English Language Arts, not only grammar. Unfortunately, there is no testing available at this time that specifically measures students’ grammar preparation. However, a command of English grammar is needed for the writing portion as well as some of the multiple choice portion of the SC Ready, SAT, and ACT exams. Unfortunately, the attempt to teach grammar effectively is a relatively new idea in the South Carolina State Standards. Prior to 2015, “some states, like California, required grammar instruction, while other states, like South Carolina, only required that students master mechanics and sentence types by any means necessary” (Smith 1). South Carolina did not directly require teachers to teach grammar in their classrooms. All of this changed in 2015 when South Carolina adopted standards based on Common Core National Standards (Kerr). These standards focus on prescriptive grammar using Standard English “because it is the grammar that’s associated with long-term success in public schools, completion of higher education, and employment with opportunities for professional advancement and financial rewards” (Gartland and Smolkin 392).

Common Core breaks down grammar expectations by grade level. Now, teachers in higher grades are given students who have not had much practice at all with grammar prior to 2015. These students are now supposed to enter into advanced grammar instruction that will prepare them for the writing in college and beyond. For example, students are supposed to be able to use a variety of sentence structures by sixth grade and be able to correct misplaced and dangling modifiers by seventh (“Language Progressive Skills”). Gartland and Smolkin assert that “teachers face an imposing charge . . . there is an emerging consensus among researchers that teachers have a social responsibility to provide all students with access to SE grammar” (394). The problem is that students have not been given the prior knowledge needed to meet the demands of the new curriculum, and teachers have not been given the resources or preparation to know how to effectively fill the gaps in their students’ education.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

Clearly, a firm foundational knowledge of the complexities and inner workings of grammar, as it is interconnected with writing, is essential for student success in high school and beyond. This foundation, laid in middle school at the latest, must involve explicit practice and explanation in Standard American English. With the adoption of Common Core, the foundation that should have been laid throughout the students’ school career is instead being bottlenecked into later grades. The purpose of my study was to discover the effectiveness of grammar instruction in South Carolina and to find ways of making that instruction more effective. To do this, I administered surveys to students and teachers throughout the state to determine their perception of the instruction. In several 9th grade classes, I also administered pre-tests and post-tests to determine student progress following instruction. At the end of the study, I have determined that while students showed marginal improvement after grammar instruction, more

varied and intensive instruction is needed throughout the state and in all grade levels if students are to meet the level of writing required for a professional career.

GRAMMAR SURVEY RESULTS

At the end of the 2016-2017 school year and once again at the start of the 2017-2018 school year, I emailed middle and high-school teachers throughout South Carolina and requested that they and their students complete an anonymous survey on grammar instruction in the classroom. Eighty-one students and forty-one teachers participated in the survey. The responses primarily came from Kershaw, Lancaster, Rock Hill, and York county schools. The results of those surveys are outlined in the following sections. See the appendix for tables detailing the results described below.

STUDENT SURVEYS

When students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in learning grammar terminology (nouns, verbs participles, etc.) on a scale from one to five with one being very dissatisfied and five being satisfied, the average response was a 3.59 with an overwhelming 79% of the eighty-one students responding with either a three or four. This response suggests that students are reasonably satisfied with the instruction that they receive in parts of speech. Similarly, when the same students were asked to rate their satisfaction in learning to label parts of a sentence, the average response was 3.44 with 81% of students responding with either a three or four. Again, students are reasonably satisfied with this aspect of their instruction. This survey also revealed that these students were most satisfied with their learning of using correct grammar in speaking. The average response was 4.2 on this question. They were less satisfied, though not significantly so, with their instruction in writing. This response yielded an average score of 4.01. When asked about their instruction in using the conventions of grammar (punctuation and

spelling), students responded with the average response of 4.1. In all, this multifaceted questioning showed that students were most satisfied with using correct grammar in speaking and least satisfied with labeling parts of a sentence.

Question two asked students to rate their confidence in writing in Standard American English. Of the eighty responses to this question, only eight (10%) of the students responded that they were slightly confident. Thirty-nine (48.75%) of the students responded that they were moderately confident in this skill. Twenty-four (30%) of the students responded that they were very confident in their ability. Finally, 9 (11.25%) of the students were extremely confident in their ability. In all, 90% of students said that they were moderately to extremely confident in their ability..

Very similar results appeared in question three, which asked students how well they understand common errors in writing and how to avoid them. Only one of the students (1.23%) responded that they did not understand common errors at all. Six of the students (7.41%) responded that they understand this slightly. Thirty-three of the students (40.74%) responded that they understand this moderately well. The exact same number of students, thirty-three (40.74%), responded that they understand this very well. Finally, eight students (9.88%), responded that they understand this concept extremely well. In all, 91.36% of students said that they can recognize common errors in writing moderately to extremely well.

Despite their apparent confidence, when asked if they feel that further instruction in Standard American English could aid their preparation for high school, eleven (13.58%) of the students responded that it could slightly help them. Twenty-nine (35.8%) of the students responded that it could moderately help them. Twenty-four (29.63%) of the students that it could help them very much. Finally, seventeen students (20.99%) of the students reported that this

would be extremely helpful. In all, 86.42% of the students surveyed responded that additional instruction would be moderately to extremely helpful for them.

Results were much more diverse in question five, which asked if students could identify a sentence as being exclamatory, declarative, or interrogative. Six students (7.59%) reported that they could do this none of the time. Ten students (12.66%) reported that they could do this some of the time. Sixteen students (20.25%) reported that they could do this half of the time. Twenty-six students (32.91%) reported that they could do this most of the time. Finally, twenty-one students (26.58 %) claimed that they could do this all of the time. In all, 79.74% of students reported that they could identify these sentences half to all of the time.

Question six asked students if they knew what a prepositional phrase is and how to use it. Fifty-four students (69.23%) answered true and twenty-four students (30.77%) answered false. This suggests that the majority of students feel confident in this skill.

Question seven asked students if they knew how to use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns in the proper case. One student (1.25%) responded that they strongly disagree that they have this knowledge. Fifteen students (18.75%) responded that they disagree. Sixty students (75%) claimed that they agree that they have this skill. Finally, four students (5%) strongly agree with this claim. In all, 80% of students believe that they can properly use pronouns.

In question eight, students were asked if they could write an example of a simple, compound, and complex sentence. Seventeen students (21.7%) disagreed with this assertion. Forty-eight students (64.54%) agreed with this statement. Finally, thirteen students (16.67%) strongly agreed with this claim. This means that 81.21% of the students surveyed believe that they can write an example of each type of sentence.

The last multiple choice question on this survey asked students how their teacher taught grammar during the year. Seventeen of the students (21.52%) reported that their teacher combined the teacher of grammar with writing. Fourteen students (17.72%) reported that their teacher taught grammar separately from writing. Forty-four students (55.7%) claimed that their teacher both taught grammar with writing and outside of it. Fortunately, only four students (5.06%) claim that their teacher did not teach grammar. This means that nearly 95% of students had a teacher that taught grammar in some form.

The last question on this survey asked students to briefly describe their experience learning English grammar in the classroom. Unfortunately, this question is not included in the appendix due to an inability in the survey program to generate a concise list of responses. Instead, I will highlight the variety of the responses given.

1. “i feel like the bell ringers don't help at all. but they are good to pass time”
2. “we did a lot of interactive work last year and I learned how to label sentences and identify parts of speech”
3. “i have a difficult time when it comes to grammar and other things related to grammar”
4. “I was taught more on what nouns and such were, but not as much for how to use them. We never really went over structures of a sentence such as simple and complex sentences. We did go through basic grammar and did alot on writing [*sic*].”
5. “While learning English grammar in the classroom, I believe that we were thoroughly taught the concepts of grammar, and how important it is in writing and speaking. We learned grammar instruction, parts of a sentence, grammar conventions, and how to correctly use grammar in and out of writing. I understand the correct concepts of grammar and how to use it correctly.”

6. “Although we did talk [*sic*] quite a few of notes for writing essays and other notes but we would not go over the notes that we took and wouldn't do activities to know how to use it.”
7. Twenty-three students responded with some form of “it was good.”
8. Eight students responded that they find grammar to be a difficult concept.
9. Seven students responded that bell-ringers made learning difficult.
10. Five students mentioned positive experiences in their grammar classes, particularly when using the program “NoRedInk [*sic*].”

TEACHER SURVEYS

I gave teachers a similar survey to the one that I gave the students. I did this so that I could compare the data between the two to find similarities and discrepancies. However, I did add questions to the teacher survey in order to gain more insight into student ability. The results are detailed below, just as they were in the student section. Again, tables with the information can be found in the appendix.

When teachers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in their students’ understanding of grammar terminology (nouns, verbs participles, etc.) at the beginning of the year on a scale from one to five (with one very dissatisfied and five being satisfied), the average response was a 2.12 with 70.73% of the forty-one teachers responding with either a one or two. This suggests that teachers are very unsatisfied with student comprehension in parts of speech. Similarly, when the same teachers were asked to rate their satisfaction in student ability to label parts of a sentence, the average response was 1.73 with 82.93% of teachers responding with either a one or two. Again, teachers are very unsatisfied. This survey also revealed that these teachers, like their students, were most satisfied with their learning of using correct grammar in

speaking. However, this was only marginally so. The average response was 2.85 on this question. They were less satisfied, though not significantly so, with their use in writing. This response yielded an average score of 2.49. When asked about their students using the conventions of grammar (punctuation and spelling), teachers responded with the average response of 2.58. In all, this multifaceted question showed that teachers were most satisfied with using correct grammar in speaking and least satisfied with labeling parts of a sentence.

The second question, not included in the appendix, was constructed response. I asked teachers to describe their students' ability to write when they enter the classroom at the beginning of the year. Some of the responses are detailed below. I tried to choose responses that highlight the views most widely represented in the results.

1. "It depends if the student is CP or Honors. Honors students are usually fairly good writers but some do not understand a thesis sentence or a topic sentence. CP students (regular) have a range of abilities but many cannot recognize a fragment from a sentence."
2. "Most of the students I teach who are "at grade level" are able to form sentences on paper. (They do not often speak using complete sentences.) Most are aware that paragraphs exist and some are able to write good cohesive paragraphs. Many do not realize that paragraphs need to be indented. Some think that indentation can be in the center of the line. It is as if when reading they do not notice the formatting of books, novels, etc. Many do not know simple conventions such as capitalizing the word I."
3. "Depending on whether the students are advanced or gen. ed. will determine their ability when entering my class. In advanced classes, I have an expectation that they are able to write with accurate conventions but will need assistance with voice and organization. In addition, students do not yet know how to develop a thesis or support an argument

effectively. Gen. Ed. students come to me with varying degrees of writing abilities. Some may not use punctuation, understand capitalization rules, or basic phonetic spelling rules.

(A favorite example: are = our. To which I exclaim "Arrrr, was ye raised by pirates!?"

4. "Well, considering the fact that I teach Honors English II to Freshmen, as well as low-level English I, I have a very mixed bag of students in this department. Overall, my Honors students know how to compose sentences, but they do not know how to analyze, and write in a very short, choppy manner. They struggle with comma usage and comma splices especially, and lack a wide vocabulary, leading to overuse of the same word. They understand how to write a basic sentence, but they do not remember a lot of the parts of speech or how the parts work together. They know how to write because they read, but they cannot explain why a sentence does or does not work."
5. "The English I students are very likely to write the same way that they speak - colloquially. They often use slang, misunderstood words, subject-verb disagreement, etc. They struggle with adopting the formal tone of academic writing, and also lack a wide vocabulary. Their understanding of punctuation is limited to periods and questions marks; many of them have never used a semicolon, have no idea what it is for, and avoid commas as well because they would rather not have any than have them in the wrong place."

The third question asked teachers to rate their confidence in their students' ability to write in Standard American English. Seven teachers (17.5%) stated that they were not confident in their students' ability. Thirteen teachers (32.5%) stated that they were slightly confident in their students' ability. Fifteen teachers (37.5%) stated that they were moderately confident. Four teachers (10%) said that they were slightly confident. Finally, only one teacher (2.5%) responded

that they were extremely confident. Overall, this poll on the response to this question was split precisely evenly between teachers answering that they were not or only slightly confident (50%) and teachers saying that they were moderately to extremely confident (50%).

Question four asked teachers how well their students understand common errors in writing and how to avoid them. Three of the teachers (7.5%) stated that their students did not understand this at all. An overwhelming twenty-one teachers (52.5%) stated that their students understand this slightly. Fifteen of the teachers (37.5%) stated that their students understand this moderately well. Only one teacher (2.5%) stated that her students understand this very well. None of the teachers reported that their students understand this concept extremely well. In all, 60% of teachers said that their students recognize common errors in writing only slightly well or not at all.

Question five asked teachers if further instruction in Standard American English could aid their students' preparation for high school. No teacher responded either *not at all* or *slightly well*. Nine teachers (22.5%) responded that it could moderately help. Eleven teachers (27.5%) responded that it could very much help. Twenty teachers (50%) responded that it could help their students extremely. That means that 100% of teachers surveyed believe that further instruction would help prepare students to some extent.

The sixth survey question asked teachers if the students who enter their classroom could identify a sentence as being *exclamatory*, *declarative*, or *interrogative*. Six teachers (15.38%) responded that the students could do this none of the time. Fourteen teachers (35.9%) responded that their students could do this some of the time. Nine teachers (23.0%) responded that their students could do this half of the time. Eight teachers (20.51%) responded that their students could do this most of the time. Only two teachers (5.13%) responded that their students could do

this all of the time. The mean value for this particular question was 2.64, with 58.98% of the responses being either some of the time or half of the time.

When teachers were asked in question seven if students knew what a prepositional phrase was and how to use it, six teachers responded affirmatively. On the other hand, thirty-three teachers (84.62%) responded with it being a false statement. Clearly, unlike the students, teachers do not believe that students have this skill.

Question eight asked teachers if students know how to use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns in the proper case. Eleven teachers (28.95%) responded that they strongly disagree that students have this knowledge. Eighteen teachers (47.37%) responded that they disagree. Eight teachers (21.05%) claimed that they agree that they have this skill. Finally, one teacher (2.63%) strongly agrees with this claim. In all, 76.32% of teachers disagree or strongly disagree that students can properly use pronouns.

In question nine, teachers were asked if students could write an example of a simple, compound, and complex sentence. Twelve teachers (30%) strongly disagreed with this claim. Twenty teachers (50%) disagreed with this claim. Eight teachers (20%) agreed with this claim. Finally, no teacher strongly agreed with this claim. This means that 80% of the teachers surveyed believe that their students are not able to write an example of each type of sentence.

When teachers were asked if there should be a larger emphasis on teaching English grammar in the standards, two teachers (5%) strongly disagreed. Three teachers (7.5%) disagreed. Nineteen teachers (47.5%) agreed. Finally, sixteen teachers (40%) strongly agreed. In total, 87.5% of teachers surveyed believed that there should be a larger emphasis in the standards.

In the last multiple-choice question on the survey, I asked teachers how they teach grammar. Nine teachers (23.09%) reported that they teach grammar in writing. One teacher (2.56%) reported that he or she teaches grammar in isolation. Twenty-eight teachers (71.79%) reported that they teach grammar both through writing and separate from writing. Only one teacher (2.56%) reported that he or she does not teach grammar to his or her students. Fortunately, this means that 97.44% of teachers surveyed teach grammar in some form.

The last question on the survey asked teachers to describe their experience teaching grammar in the classroom. This question is not included in the appendix, but an overview of the most common responses is listed below.

1. “We have NO TIME to teach grammar in depth in our allotted time for ELA. I try to get to the basics, but mostly it is a quick run through.”
2. “I include a fall warm up that is a review of grammar skills and I also teach new grammar skills such as dangling or misplaced modifiers. Students practice on web based platforms like classrooms.com and no red ink.”
3. “The only students who have had any real grammar instruction are those who transfer in from another district - mostly from out of state. My non-honors students, even if they can write an acceptable essay, claim that they have never been exposed to parts of speech or parts of a sentence. I have had English teachers tell me that they do not teach English grammar because they don't know how; they've never had it in school either.
4. I find it odd that with all the emphasis on using graphic organizers to assist students in making connections, we fail to see how diagramming sentences can provide insights into our language. I also notice that Spanish and French teachers spend a significant amount

of time with basic language grammar skills, while we are chasing our tails with "Whole Reading Theory."

5. "I have taught grammar in the classroom for 15 years or more at many grade levels, but I typically was 'the lone ranger' in doing so. Many of the elementary teachers focus on reading instruction because of state testing. By middle school, that trend often continues because seldom do your ELA teachers enjoy teaching grammar. They are often readers themselves and would prefer to spend the limited class time teaching reading through classroom novel studies."
6. "It is hard to fit grammar into instruction at the high school level. Especially with the amount of gaps students have. It becomes time consuming to get them caught up to where they should be at the 9th grade level before being able to move on to other aspects. Grammar is a constant issue when it comes to writing.

GRAMMAR TESTS

As part of my research, I contacted several 9th grade teachers from around the state and asked them to administer identical pre-assessments and post-assessments to their students before and after their usual grammar instruction. The content of the assessments came directly from what students were supposed to learn in the standards from kindergarten to eighth grade. Each of the three classes who took this test were students in CP classes (non-honors) with varying needs within the class. A copy of the test can be found in the appendix along with an answer key.

The questions on each test were broken into seven grammatical categories: parts of speech, clauses, sentence type, parts of a sentence, verbals, pronouns, and a written clause. In the paragraphs that follow, I will describe how well each class on average performed in each category before and after instruction. I will then describe the class averages as a whole before

and after instruction. Please remember, students were not specifically taught the skills on the test. Teachers were instructed to use their normal grammar instruction strategies after the pre-test to see if their usual strategies were successful in bridging any missing information.

The first category is parts of speech. There were eight questions in this category. In the first classes' pre-test, students correctly answered two of the eight questions on average. On the post-test, they could identify four. This means that the class went from identifying 25% to 50% of the questions. On the second classes' pre-test, the class was able to identify two and a half of the answers on average. On the post-test, this number increased to four. This means that students went from 30% correct to 50% correct after instruction. In the final class, students were able to identify two correct answers on the pre-test and three on the post-test. This showed growth from 25% to 30% after instruction.

The second category is clauses (independent and dependent). In the first class, both the pre-test and post-test showed the same result. The students were able to correctly answer only one of the three clause-based questions. In the second class, students went from answering only one of the questions to answering two of them. This shows growth from 33% to 66%. In the third class, there was no growth between the pre-test and post-test. Both tests have an average of one correct response.

The third category is sentence type (compound, complex, exclamatory, interrogative, etc.). In the first class, the pre-test showed an average of three out of five correct answers. The post-test showed three and a half out of five. This is a growth of 58% to 69% correct. In the second class, both the pre-test and post-test had the same score, three out of five. In the third class, there was no growth as well. Students scored two out of five on both the pre-test and post-test.

The fourth category is parts of a sentence (subject, predicate, direct object, etc). There were five questions in this section. In the first class, there was no change between the pre-test and post-test. Both tests showed an average score of three. In the second and third class, there was also no growth. All four tests (two pre-tests and two post-tests) showed an average score of two and a half out of five. It does not appear that any instruction took place for this question.

The fifth category is verbals (gerunds, participles, and infinitives). There are two questions in this category. In the first class, the pre-test and post-test both showed an average score of one half out of two. In the second class, there was growth between the pre-test score of one and the post-test score of one and a half. In the third class, the scores remained stagnant between the pre-test and post-test scores of one-half out of two questions.

The sixth category is pronouns. There are nine questions in this category. In the first class, there was growth from the pre-test score of eight to a post-test score of nine. In the second class, there was similar growth from a pre-test average of seven and a half to eight on the post-test. Finally, in the last class, there was growth from a pre-test score of six to a post-test score of seven.

The seventh category is a written clause that asked students to turn an independent clause into a dependent one. Of all the tests given, only three of the forty-seven students were able to correctly transform the sentence. One student could do it on the pre-test and two more were able to on the post-test.

As a whole, the first class saw growth from 50% to 59% after instruction. The second class saw growth from 53% to 61%. Finally, the third class saw growth from 46% to 50%. While these increases in skill level are not by any means high, they do show that the students are capable of growth and that with more targeted instruction, the growth could be higher.

CONCLUSIONS ACROSS RESEARCH

Based on the student feedback from the surveys, the majority of the students clearly believe that that they have received high-quality grammar instruction. Every single response on the survey indicated that the majority of students are confident in their skills and knowledge. This response is a sharp contrast to the teacher surveys on the same topics, in which the majority of teachers, on every question, assert that their students do not have the skills or knowledge needed. Why is there such discrepancy between the two surveys?

Based on the pre-test and post-test results, the data appear to favor the side of the teachers' survey. A breakdown of each topic, across each form of research, is shown in the table below:

	Student Survey	Teacher Survey On Students	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Parts of Speech	79% Moderately to Extremely Satisfied	70.73% Dissatisfied	27% Average Score	46% Average Score
Clauses	81.21% Agree or Strongly Agree	80% Strongly Disagree or Disagree	35% Average Score	44% Average Score
Sentence Type Identification	79.74% Half to Most of the Time	58.98% Some to Half of the Time	59% Average Score	61% Average Score
Parts of a Sentence	91.36% Moderately to Extremely Well	60% Slightly Well or Not at All	51.3% Average Score	52% Average Score
Pronoun Usage	80% Agree or Strongly Agree	76.32% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	74% Average Score	84% Average Score

Based on the current grading scale in South Carolina, a sixty is passing. With this scale in mind, the only “passing” topics listed above are Sentence Type Identification in the post-test and Pronoun Usage in the pre-test and post-test. Clearly, the teachers surveyed have a right to feel dissatisfied in their students’ abilities. The answer to this problem lies primarily in the written responses of both the teachers and students.

Several students stated that their teachers rely on bell-ringers as the only type of grammar instruction taught to them. Bell-ringers are when a teacher has students begin class by completing a prompt on the board. Typically, the teacher will review the correct answers to the bell-ringer, but will not teach the concept in-depth. The concepts taught in the bell-ringer typically do not correlate to the rest of the curriculum. Other students remembered “taking notes,” but they did not remember being given “activities to know how to use it.” Students also regretted that while they know what the concepts, like parts of speech, are, they never learned how to use them. Finally, a significant portion of the students admitted that grammar is hard. It is true that without clear and constant instruction, grammar can be a confusing and troublesome topic for students. I would like to note that while many of the comments were negative, students noted particular success with online programs such as “NoRedInk [sic].” This response suggests that perhaps the methodology of how grammar is presented, particularly through media that students are used to, could play a role in making this otherwise cumbersome topic more accessible.

Teachers have their own reasons as to why it is difficult for students to understand grammar-based topics; one of these is particularly relevant to my own research. The only teachers who volunteered to administer the pre-test and post-test to their students were College Preparatory (CP) teachers. Teachers have noted a clear difference in the writing abilities of CP

students and Honors, primarily due to the typical students' background in these classes. While they are quick to admit that CP students have a "wide range of abilities," they also recognize that "many cannot recognize a fragment from a sentence." Does this fault lie entirely on the students? Of course not. However, one teacher recognizes that, "students are very likely to write the same way that they speak - colloquially. They often use slang, misunderstood words, subject-verb disagreement, etc." It is then the job of the teacher to correct these misunderstandings and teach students the difference between Standard English and their own unique dialects. Without this correction, students have no reason to believe that what they hear at home is inappropriate for school.

I believe that part of the problem that these surveys attest to is that many students do not recognize the difference between dialect and Standard American English. They believe that if they hear people say something, then it is correct. This is not entirely unfounded. Just because something is not standard does not make it "wrong." It only makes it un-academic. Perhaps recognizing and celebrating this distinction would help to clear-up several of the problems that teachers are seeing in student writing. The distinction, while subtle, is crucial.

This research was far from perfect. The surveys and tests, due to limited resources, were done on a volunteer-basis. The tests themselves were only given to three classes with very similar demographics and types of learners. If this research were to be continued, as I believe that it should be, then I would suggest trying to get it backed by school administrators to make the surveys mandatory for all schools. I would also differentiate the surveys by grade level and class identification (CP/Honors/AP). Finally, I would also expand the pre-tests and post-tests to a larger pool with varying identification and grade-level. I believe that it would also be interesting to see if varying types of instruction (direct instruction, technology-based, teaching grammar in

writing, and teaching grammar in reading) affect the results of the tests. This instruction could be done with similar student groups in identical grades.

Regardless of the shortcomings in the research, the results still show an interesting problem in our education system. Our students believe that they have a strong command of the English language, while the test-results and teacher surveys suggest a very different reality. How then do educators correct the problem? Unfortunately, there are not many ideas currently out there. For the most part, the solutions are grouped into three categories: teaching grammar in reading, teaching grammar in writing, and teaching grammar in technology. Even so, teaching grammar in reading and writing can easily be looked at as one in the same. For the purposes of this paper, I will choose to join them as one strategy.

SOLUTIONS

In this next section, I will detail these two strategies for addressing the juxtaposition of students' perceived knowledge and their actual knowledge. These strategies are not meant to be taken in isolation. Instead, they should be used in combination and as a means to reinforce grammatical concepts. While I am highlighting these strategies in this section, I strongly encourage further research and exploration before they are implemented into the classroom. Also, I encourage teachers to add their own creative twists to these strategies so as to make them fit into their own classroom dynamic.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is more dominant in education than it ever has been before. Across the state, districts are making efforts to promote 1:1 technology, meaning having one device available for every student. Typically, these are laptops or iPads. For example, Richland School District two has successfully implemented 1:1 technology in grades three through twelve where each student

has his or her own laptop (Zais 19). For technology to be increasingly more dominant in our school system, teachers need to adapt their strategies to meet those changes. For the most part, this type of instruction has already been done in writing. Teachers have opened up to using programs like Microsoft Word and Google Docs, but “as student become more technologically savvy in creating and writing drafts, teachers must consider changing the way they implement grammar” (Lacina 248). For instance, students can use online chat rooms for this purpose. The teacher would act as a facilitator as students suggest revisions, share ideas, and talk about writing (Lacina 248). Technology-based instruction will make grammar instruction feel more natural for today’s technology natives. Additionally, websites can serve as a way for students to publish their work and enter contests. A few popular websites for submitting writing are NCTE.org, TeenInk.com, and Writing.com (Gallagher 138). Contests like these can make students feel as though their writing is valued and their work is validated.

There are numerous websites and online programs devoted to this topic. Some top examples are NoRedInk, which has been mentioned previously. This website teaches students basic skills by tracking student progress on particular topics. The teacher creates a virtual classroom and creates learning modules for the students. Two similar websites are Quill and Virtual Grammar Lab (Ferlazzo, “Four Strategies“). These sites also allow teachers to make virtual classrooms. These websites allow the students to experience a self-paced and interactive world of grammar instruction. The teacher still gets to assign the lessons and reviews that are relevant to the course, but the full burden of instruction is no longer solely on the teacher. These websites can act as a practice tool or as an assessment tool. Regardless of the teachers’ choice, the students are able to experience grammar through a familiar media. The teacher can monitor and evaluate student progress through the website as well.

Larry Ferlazzo, a teacher at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, California, and winner of several awards, including the 2007 International Reading Association Award For Reading and Technology, has written several articles and created a blog which detail several of his award-winning practices. One of his posts comprises a list of free online tools for grammar instruction through technology; these tools are listed in order of student ability with headings describing each tool. Among this list are such resources such as Grammar Gold, which supplies auditory support to the lessons; BrainPop, with interactive movies; Road to Grammar, which has quizzes; and many other amazing resources (Ferlazzo, “The Best Sites”). A link to this resource, the most comprehensive list that I could find, can be found in the Works Cited page.

This availability does not, however, mean that technology-based instruction should replace normal classroom instruction. Technological instruction may make grammar more relevant and accessible to technology natives; however, technology has not advanced to the point to make it enough on its own. Programs such as Noredink and Quill, which automate instruction, are beneficial, but while “an automated approach to concept-based grammar instruction may be effective for at least some aspects of one particular pedagogical objective . . . it is clearly not a substitute for live teaching of it at this point” (Lyddon 109). As stated previously, these websites work best as a practice tool or as an assessment tool. Students need direct instruction so that they can ask questions and see the application of the theory. Rather than teach several things poorly, we should teach few things deeply and well; or, as Weaver calls defines it, instruction should be “an inch wide and a mile deep” (16). Students can then use these online programs as a means of practicing what they learned from this deep instruction. Technological tools, as a supplement, can be a huge resource to a classroom teacher.

TEACHING GRAMMAR IN READING AND WRITING

A popular current trend in education is Teaching Grammar in Writing. In fact, “at present, more and more researchers and educators seem to support grammar teaching, but only in the context of reading and writing” (as cited in Feng and Powers 68). This practice is particularly true in the revising, proofreading, or editing stage, when the content seems most relevant to the students. Teaching grammar in writing allows the student to see their errors and understand how they impede comprehension.

One example how this theory was tested came in a study from an elementary classroom. Shoudong Feng and Kathy Powers conducted research with their fifth grade class to find out if teaching grammar in writing was truly effective. In their study, the teachers collected three different writing samples throughout the year and judged the quality based on sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. To clarify, Feng and Powers determined the following:

For example, under Usage, there are wrong case, confusion between homophones, and wrong verb forms. Under Sentence Structure, mistakes were classified into having no subject, incorrect subject-verb agreement, and sentence fragments. Finally in Mechanics, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, apostrophe, and incorrect plural forms are identified.

(68)

Based on the errors that they encountered, the teachers then hosted mini-lessons with the students to help them locate and correct the errors in their writing. After the mini lessons, the students would work in small groups so that they could help each other correct these errors. The teachers would collect further samples and repeat this process throughout the year. The teachers determined that while students showed clear growth after the lesson, some errors returned at the end of the year. Feng and Powers concede that, “One possible explanation is that the information

from the mini-lesson instruction was not as well retained at the end of the school year as it was a week after it was presented” (69). A similar model to the one that Sheng and Powers suggest could be easily implemented into any elementary, middle, or high school classroom.

A similar study was also done by fifth grade teachers, Lisa Robinson and Jay Feng. These teachers chose eighteen students as subjects to use in examining common errors in the students’ writing. Then, based on their errors, the teachers used PowerPoint to deliver their mini-lessons with a variety of strategies that the teachers had learned in a professional-development training (Robinson and Feng 9). The students would immediately, after the lesson, work on revising and editing their work based on what they learned. The teachers and students would hold these mini-lessons and work sessions for one hour a day, three days a week, for eleven weeks (Robinson and Feng 10). Before this study, both teachers taught grammar in isolation and saw no growth in student writing. However, the teachers reflect that with this new approach, “the students were able to see their errors and receive targeted instruction as well as receive additional feedback from the teachers” (Robinson and Feng 13). Teaching grammar in this way helps students to make connections between the rules and the application of those rules. Without this specific and targeted instruction, students struggle to see the relevance to their own writing and how it helps them communicate effectively.

In addition to teaching grammar in writing, students should also be taught grammar in reading so that they can see the relationships between the two language areas. Allowing students the opportunity to dissect what they read in terms of grammar is a great activity to show them how language works. For example, students can translate fairy tales and poetry into Standard English by paraphrasing each line and then examine the difference between the text (Rothstein and Rothstein 168). This activity will allow students to see how the writer manipulated the line

in order to convey a new message and would be an excellent way to teach parts of speech so that students can identify how the author manipulated language when changing the order of the sentence. The inclusion of grammar in reading could also be extended into texts with more difficult language patterns, such as Shakespeare and Chaucer. Another activity to help with this skill is to read poems, such as Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" and replace the nonsensical words with likely English substitutes- categorize the word by the part of speech" (Rothstein and Rothstein 169). This activity is very similar to a Mad Lib, but with more academic application. Such an activity would help students to see how knowing parts of speech can help them make sense of difficult texts, and will eventually translate into helping them build on their skill of learning difficult vocabulary when reading through context clues.

CONCLUSION

South Carolina is in desperate need of emphasis in grammar instruction. Since the introduction of Common Core in 2015, teachers are attempting to provide remedial instruction to students in order to help them reach the skill-level needed for success in higher education and the workforce. Students do not realize their lack of preparation before they enter higher education, and therefore do not see the need to focus on any direct grammar-instruction that they are given. Teachers, in return, struggle to help students see the necessity of knowing and using Standard American English in their writing and communication. In part, this miscommunication is due to the lack of distinction between descriptive grammar, which allows for the correctness in student dialect, and prescriptive grammar, which requires the rules and form of Standard English.

Therefore, teachers have to work to help students both see both the significance and connections between grammar and communication—in reading as well as writing. While there are a variety of strategies and resources available to accomplish this goal, until grammar is seen

as a necessary component of education, none of them will truly be effective. Grammar instruction in South Carolina should clearly be an object of concern. However, based on teachers' own admission on their surveys, most do not feel that what they teach is either valued by or effective for their students. I hope that by presenting these findings, further research will be done and eventually, more emphasis will be placed on a skill-set that sets students up for success or failure in their future careers.

Appendix

STUDENT SURVEYS

Question One Results

Rate your satisfaction level with the following aspects of your experience learning English grammar last year:
(Very dissatisfied) 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 (Very satisfied)

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0

	{1} 1	{2} 2	{3} 3	{4} 4	{5} 5	Rating Average	Response Count
Grammar Terminology Instruction (Nouns, Verbs, Participles, Gerunds, etc)	1.23% (1)	8.64% (7)	30.86% (25)	48.15% (39)	11.11% (9)	3.59	81
Labeling parts of a sentence	0.0% (0)	11.25% (9)	41.25% (33)	40.0% (32)	7.5% (6)	3.44	80
Using correct grammar in speaking	0.0% (0)	1.27% (1)	24.05% (19)	27.85% (22)	46.84% (37)	4.2	79
Using correct grammar in writing	0.0% (0)	7.41% (6)	22.22% (18)	32.1% (26)	38.27% (31)	4.01	81
Understanding the conventions of grammar (punctuation and spelling)	0.0% (0)	6.25% (5)	11.25% (9)	48.75% (39)	33.75% (27)	4.1	80

Question Two Results

Based on your experience with grammar instruction, rate your confidence in your ability to write in Standard American English (using standard mechanics and grammar).

Answered: 80 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not confident	0.0%	0
Slightly confident	10.0%	8
Moderately confident	48.75%	39
Very confident	30.0%	24
Extremely confident	11.25%	9

Question Three Results

I understand common errors in writing and how to avoid them (such as sentence fragments).

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	1.23%	1
Slightly	7.41%	6
Moderately	40.74%	33
Very	40.74%	33
Extremely	9.88%	8

Question Four Results

Do you feel as though further instruction in Standard American English could aid your preparation for high school?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	0.0%	0
Slightly	13.58%	11
Moderately	35.8%	29
Very	29.63%	24
Extremely	20.99%	17

Question Five

I can identify a sentence as being exclamatory, declarative, or interrogative.

Answered: 79 Skipped: 2

	Response Percent	Response Count
None of the time	7.59%	6
Some of the time	12.66%	10
Half the time	20.25%	16
Most of the time	32.91%	26
All the time	26.58%	21

Question Six Results

I understand what a prepositional phrase is and how to use it.

Answered: 78 Skipped: 3

	Response Percent	Response Count
True	69.23%	54
False	30.77%	24

Question Seven Results

I understand how to use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns in the proper case.

Answered: 80 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	1.25%	1
Disagree	18.75%	15
Agree	75.0%	60
Strongly Agree	5.0%	4

Question Eight Results

If asked, I could write an example of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Answered: 78 Skipped: 3

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
Disagree	21.79%	17
Agree	61.54%	48
Strongly Agree	16.67%	13

Question Nine Results

When I learn grammar, my teacher last year

Answered: 79 Skipped: 2

	Response Percent	Response Count
combined the teaching of grammar with writing	21.52%	17
taught grammar separately from writing	17.72%	14
did both A and B	55.7%	44
My teacher did not teach grammar	5.06%	4

GRAMMAR SURVEYS ON TEACHER PERCEPTION

Question One Results

Based on your experience with grammar instruction, rate your confidence in your students' ability to write in Standard American English (using standard mechanics and grammar).

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
[1] Not confident	17.5%	7
[2] Slightly confident	32.5%	13
[3] Moderately confident	37.5%	15
[4] Very confident	10.0%	4
[5] Extremely confident	2.5%	1

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Not confident	Extremely confident	1	Extremely confident	15	Moderately confident	2.48	2.5	0.99	0.97

Question Three Results

Rate your satisfaction level with the following aspects of your students' understanding of English grammar when they enter your classroom at the beginning of the year:

(Very dissatisfied) 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 (Very satisfied)

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Grammar Terminology Instruction (Nouns, Verbs, Participles, Gerunds, etc)	24.39% (10)	46.34% (19)	21.95% (9)	7.32% (3)	0.00% (0)	2.12	41
Labeling parts of a sentence	48.78% (20)	34.15% (14)	12.2% (5)	4.88% (2)	0.00% (0)	1.73	41
Using correct grammar in speaking	4.88% (2)	31.71% (13)	39.02% (16)	21.95% (9)	2.44% (1)	2.85	41
Using correct grammar in writing	12.2% (5)	36.59% (15)	41.46% (17)	9.76% (4)	0.00% (0)	2.49	41
Understanding the conventions of grammar (punctuation and spelling)	15.0% (6)	27.5% (11)	42.5% (17)	15.0% (6)	0.00% (0)	2.58	40

Question Four Results

The students who enter my classroom appear to understand common errors in writing and how to avoid them (such as sentence fragments).

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
[1] Not at all	7.5%	3
[2] Slightly	52.5%	21
[3] Moderately	37.5%	15
[4] Very	2.5%	1
[5] Extremely	0.0%	0

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Not at all	Very	1	Very	21	Slightly	2.35	2	0.66	0.44

Question Five Results

Do you think further instruction in Standard American English could aid your students' preparation for high school?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
[1] Not at all	0.0%	0
[2] Slightly	0.0%	0
[3] Moderately	22.5%	9
[4] Very	27.5%	11
[5] Extremely	50.0%	20

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Moderately	Extremely	9	Moderately	20	Extremely	4.28	4.5	0.82	0.67

Question Six Results

The students who enter my classroom can identify a sentence as being exclamatory, declarative, or interrogative.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 2

						Response Percent	Response Count
<i>[1]</i> None of the time						15.38%	6
<i>[2]</i> Some of the time						35.9%	14
<i>[3]</i> Half the time						23.08%	9
<i>[4]</i> Most of the time						20.51%	8
<i>[5]</i> All the time						5.13%	2

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
None of the time	All the time	2	All the time	14	Some of the time	2.64	2	1.14	1.29

Question Seven Results

The students who enter my classroom understand what a prepositional phrase is and how to use it.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 2

						Response Percent	Response Count
<i>[1]</i> True						15.38%	6
<i>[2]</i> False						84.62%	33

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
True	False	6	True	33	False	1.85	2	0.37	0.13

Question Eight Results

The students who enter my classroom understand how to use subjective, objective, and possessive pronouns in the proper case.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 3

	Response Percent	Response Count
{1} Strongly Disagree	28.95%	11
{2} Disagree	47.37%	18
{3} Agree	21.05%	8
{4} Strongly Agree	2.63%	1

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	1	Strongly Agree	18	Disagree	1.97	2	0.79	0.62

Question Nine Results

If asked, the students who enter my classroom could write an example of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
{1} Strongly Disagree	30.0%	12
{2} Disagree	50.0%	20
{3} Agree	20.0%	8
{4} Strongly Agree	0.0%	0

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Strongly Disagree	Agree	8	Agree	20	Disagree	1.9	2	0.71	0.5

Question Ten Results

In my opinion, there should be larger emphasis on teaching English grammar in the standards.

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

	Response Percent	Response Count
[1] Strongly Disagree	5.0%	2
[2] Disagree	7.5%	3
[3] Agree	47.5%	19
[4] Strongly Agree	40.0%	16

Range		Less Frequent		More Frequent		Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
From	To	Frequency	Value	Frequency	Value				
Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	2	Strongly Disagree	19	Agree	3.23	3	0.8	0.64

Question Eleven Results

When I teach grammar, I

Answered: 39 Skipped: 2

	Response Percent	Response Count
integrate the teaching of grammar into writing	23.08%	9
teach grammar separately from writing	2.56%	1
do both A and B	71.79%	28
I do not teach grammar to my students	2.56%	1

Grammar Post-Assessment

Instructor: _____

Name: _____

Results: _____

Class: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Parts of Speech

Look at the bolded word in each of the following sentences, determine the part of speech, and write your answer on the answer sheet. Some choices may be used more than once and some may not be used at all.

1. The girl **watched** the rabbit jump in a hole.

- a. Adjective
- b. Adverb
- c. Conjunction
- d. Interjection
- e. Noun
- f. Preposition
- g. Verb

2. "**Oh**, how peculiar," the girl thought.

- a. Adjective
- b. Adverb
- c. Conjunction
- d. Interjection
- e. Noun
- f. Preposition
- g. Verb

3. The girl followed the rabbit into the hole.
- a. Adjective
 - b. Adverb
 - c. Conjunction
 - d. Interjection
 - e. Noun
 - f. Preposition
 - g. Verb
4. The girl quickly realized that she was falling in an unusual way.
- a. Adjective
 - b. Adverb
 - c. Conjunction
 - d. Interjection
 - e. Noun
 - f. Preposition
 - g. Verb
5. There were upside-down picture frames on the walls.
- a. Adjective
 - b. Adverb
 - c. Conjunction
 - d. Interjection
 - e. Noun
 - f. Preposition
 - g. Verb

6. The girl started talking to herself so that she would not be afraid.

- a. Adjective
- b. Adverb
- c. Conjunction
- d. Interjection
- e. Noun
- f. Preposition
- g. Verb

7. Suddenly, the girl landed in an upside down room.

- a. Adjective
- b. Adverb
- c. Conjunction
- d. Interjection
- e. Noun
- f. Preposition
- g. Verb

8. She saw the rabbit running down the hall.

- a. Adjective
- b. Adverb
- c. Conjunction
- d. Interjection
- e. Noun
- f. Preposition
- g. Verb

Clauses and Sentence Types

9. Clauses have a subject and a(n) _____
- Adjective
 - Conjunction
 - Description
 - Verb
10. Which of the following is **NOT** a coordinating conjunction?
- And
 - Because
 - For
 - Nor
 - Or
 - So
 - Yet
11. Which of the following is an **INCORRECT** way to fuse two independent clauses?
- Alice opened a small door and she saw a beautiful garden.
 - Alice opened a small door, and she saw a beautiful garden.
 - Alice opened a small door; she saw a beautiful garden.
 - Alice opened a small door; as a result, she saw a beautiful garden.
12. Which of the following is an example of a compound sentence?
- I like marshmallows and chocolate.
 - I went to the store and bought chocolate.
 - I danced to the sofa, and he laughed at me.
 - I am like a bear going into hibernation during winter.

13. Which of the following is an example of a complex sentence?

- a. The boy waved at the doctor, who was walking out of his office.
- b. Alice danced around the table.
- c. The teacher gave her students a test.
- d. There are few things better than a book, a cup of hot chocolate, and a warm blanket,

14. Which of the following is an example of an exclamatory sentence?

- a. I love reading!
- b. I love reading.
- c. I love reading?
- d. None of the above

15. Which of the following is an example of an interrogative sentence?

- a. I love reading!
- b. I love reading.
- c. I love reading?
- d. None of the above

16. Which of the following is an example of a declarative sentence?

- a. I love reading!
- b. I love reading.
- c. I love reading?
- d. None of the above

Verbals and Parts of a Sentence

Answer questions 17-21 using the sentence below:

The teacher gave the students a test.

17. The subject of the sentence is:

- a. The teacher
- b. The students
- c. A test
- d. None of the above

18. The verb in this sentence is:

- a. gave
- b. The students
- c. A test
- d. All of the above

19. The predicate is:

- a. The teacher
- b. Gave the students a test
- c. The students a test
- d. a test

20. In this sentence, the direct object is:

- a. The teacher
- b. The students
- c. A test
- d. None of the above

21. In this sentence, the indirect object is:

- a. The teacher
- b. The students
- c. A test
- d. None of the above

Answer questions 22-23 using the sentence below:

The dancing parrots considered singing a chore.

22. In this sentence, “dancing” is a(n) :

- a. Gerund
- b. Infinitive
- c. Participle
- d. None of the above

23. In this sentence, “singing” is a(n):

- a. Gerund
- b. Infinitive
- c. Participle
- d. None of the above

Pronoun Usage

Choose the BEST pronoun to replace the underlined word.

24. Samantha is an excellent ballerina.

- a. Her
- b. Hers
- c. She
- d. None of the above

25. The piano belongs to Martin and Sally.

- a. Theirs
- b. Them
- c. There's
- d. They

26. The book-bag is _____

- a. I
- b. My
- c. Mine
- d. Mines

27. The apple is _____

- a. You
- b. Your
- c. Yours
- d. None of the above

28. The school is known for _____ football program.

- a. Its
- b. It's
- c. Neither are appropriate
- d. Either are appropriate

29. _____ a beautiful day!

- a. Its
- b. It's
- c. Neither are appropriate
- d. Either are appropriate

30. I went ___ the market.

- a. To
- b. Too
- c. Two
- d. None of the above

31. The market is over ____.

- a. Their
- b. There
- c. They're
- d. None of the above

32. _____ my best friend.

- a. You
- b. Your
- c. You're
- d. All of these are appropriate.

33. Turn the following independent clause into a dependent clause:

Alice looked for her cat.

Grammar Post-Assessment Answer Sheet

Instructor: _____

Name: _____

Results: _____

Class: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

1.	12.	23.
2.	13.	24.
3.	14.	25.
4.	15.	26.
5.	16.	27.
6.	17.	28.
7.	18.	29.
8.	19.	30.
9.	20.	31.
10.	21.	32.
11.	22.	
33.		

Grammar Post-Assessment Answer Key

1. G	12. C	23. A
2. D	13. A	24. C
3. F	14. A	25. B
4. B	15. C	26. C
5. A	16. B	27. C
6. C	17. A	28. A
7. E	18. A	29. B
8. F	19. B	30. A
9. D	20. C	31. B
10. B	21. B	32. C
11. A	22. C	
33. Students should add a word to the clause such as: after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whet her, or while.		

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